A

LETTER

FROM

A Gentleman in the CITY

To his

Friend in the COUNTRY,

Concerning the threaten'd Proſecution of the *Rehearſal*, put into the *News-Papers*.

SIR,

YOU and I that are By-ſtanders can Judge moſt Impartially of the Wrangles of the Town, which Entertain us ſometimes when we Want better Diſcourſe.

You deſire to know from me the Ground there is for what your *News-Papers* tell you, That the Author of the *Rehearſal* is to be Proſecuted for his *Papers*, and that there are *Warrants* of *High Treaſon* out againſt him, *&c.* You ſay you ſee no Grounds for that Method of Proceeding, and would know the Truth of the *Fact* from me.

Sr. I can tell you no more than the Talk of the Town. It is through all the Coffee-Houſes, aud makes a great Noiſe. But I can learn no other Foundation for it but the Induſtry of his Opponents, who take Pains to ſpread the Report.

They talk of Reaching him upon the *Union Act*, becauſe he Denies the *Validity* of the *Ordination*, and Conſequently of the *Baptiſm* of the *Kirk* in *Scotland*. But I ſuppoſe the *Union* was only betwixt the *Nations* and not the *Churches*. Theſe ſtand at the ſame Diſtance as before. And the Zealots in *Scotland* make no Ceremony to call the *Church* of *England* a *Limb* of *Anti-Chriſt* and of the *Whore* of *Babylon*, and Pray Publickly in their *Pulpits* for her Converſion from her *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*, meaning our *Liturgy* and *Epiſcopacy*.

And the *Church* and *Clergy* here have not been better treated by the *Diſſenters* in a great Multitude of very Bitter *Pamphlets*, beſides the Weekly Papers of *Obſervators* and *Reviews* which go thro' the *Nation*.

And the *Rehearſal* tells us, That the End of his Engaging was to ſtop this Torrent what he cou'd, and in ſome Meaſure to take off that Prejudice which Perpetual *Aſperſing* muſt Cauſe in the *People* againſt the Church and Clergy, when Nothing at all was ſaid in their Defence.

And the *Kirk* in *Scotland* may bear more Patiently his Diſputing their *Ordinations* and *Baptiſms*, or if he has ſaid any thing Sharp againſt their *Preachers*, when they ſee how Patiently the *Church* of *England* (tho' Eſtabliſh'd) has born ſo many Inſults upon her Conſtitution and her *Clergy*:

Dan. De-Foe in his *Hymn to Peace* having Painted ſeveral of the *Clergy* as Black as his Ink cou'd make them, Concludes thus againſt them all in General, p. 40.

Nor let our Charity be Cenſur'd here,
Becauſe we Crowds of Characters forbear.
The Bead-Roll of whoſe Crimes wou'd ſhew
Too Black for our Poſterity to know;
And are Conceal'd in meer Compaſſion,
Not to themſelves alone, but all the Nation;
That Foreign Countries may not ſee
Our Eccleſiaſtick *Nudity*;
And it become a new Proverbial Jeſt,
To be as Wicked as an Engliſh *Prieſt*.

And in his *Review*, Vol. 2. p. 141. he ſays, *The Generality of the Clergy ſerve to Enflame*— And p. 142. *I appeal to you, Gentlemen, Whether Generally ſpeaking, all over this Unhappy Nation, the Clergy are*

are not Three Parts in Five in a Close Conjunction with the Enemies of the Government? And p. 418. *If Words cou'd be made Treason, One Third at least of the Inferior Clergy in England wou'd be Hanged.* And p. 420. *If Raving in the Pulpit, and Raging out of it, be Loyalty, Most of the Inferior Clergy are the Loyalest Men in the Nation.* And p. 448. He calls the *Act of Uniformity, Scandalous to the Church, Injurious to the Publick Peace, and a Grievance to the whole Nation.*

This is Insulting our *Laws*, and Attacking the *Church* as to her *Establishment* and *Legal* Security. The *Act of Uniformity* primo. *Eliz.* (Printed before our *Common Prayer Book*) Guards it with severe *Penalties* upon those who shall Vilify or Deprave it by *Word, Writing*, &c. Impowering and Enjoining the *Bishops* to see this Executed. Yet this has not hinder'd the most Violent *Invectives* against it. Particularly *De Laune's Plea for the Non-Conformists*, which having made the *Popish Rites and Ceremonies* to be *Paganish*, next makes those of the *Church* of *England* to be *Popish.* And was *Burnt* above 20 Years ago, but lately *Reprinted* at least *Seven* times, as the *Review* tells Us in his *Preface* to the last *Edition* 1706. and Justifies and Commends it all, and p. 2. calls those *Martyrs*, to the Number of near 8000 (as he most falsly Asserts) who he says (as falsly) were *Murder'd* for their Breach of this *Act* in the Reign of K. *Char.* II. And lays it all upon the *Church.*

The Act of *Toleration* takes not away or suspends any Part of this Security to the *Church* in the *Act* of Q. *Elizabeth.* Or in the *Corporation* and *Test Acts.* Nor (as I suppose) do's the *Union* Meddle with them. And it wou'd seem to me to be a Breach of the *Union* to Purpose the taking away the *Legal* Security of the *Churches* on either side, as they stood at the *Union*, as if we shou'd attempt the Repeal of any Law made for the Security of the *Kirk* in *Scotland.*

Yet the *Observator* now Openly Attacks the *Test-Act*, and Proposes its being Repeal'd. *Num.* 81, 82. *Vol.* 7th. besides several other *Pamphlets.* And as I am Credibly Inform'd Mr. *S*— is now come over hither with a Collection of Three Thousand Pounds from the *Presbyterians* in *Ireland* to Promote the same Project.

But the *Rehearsal* do's not Meddle with the *Legal* Security of the *Kirk* in *Scotland*, nor do's he Propose the *Repeal* of any of the *Laws* made in her Favour; or gives so much as any Hint against the *Union.* But go's wholly and Solely upon the *Church* Dispute of *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, which I do not Understand Affects the *Union* any Manner of way, because it is Built upon the Supposition of two Different *Churches*, and to Remain *Different.*

Suppo-

Suppoſe *Popery* had Receiv'd the *Legal* Eſtabliſhment in any of theſe *Kingdoms*, wou'd that hinder the *Divines* of the other *Kingdoms* to Write againſt the *Errors* of *Rome*, and Endeavour to Reclaime them?

But if the *Papiſts Eſtabliſh'd*, and thoſe Remaining in the *Church of England Kingdom*, ſhou'd firſt Attack the *Church*, and *Vilify* her *Clergy*, and Attempt the *Repeal* of her *Legal* Eſtabliſhment, wou'd not ſhe think ſhe had Right to Defend her ſelf, to Repell the *Scandals* againſt her, and even Retort them where it might be Juſtly done? And if this was Deny'd her, or Ill taken, wou'd ſhe not think her ſelf in the moſt Extreme *Danger*, and that her *Ruin* were Deſign'd, when all her *Enemies* were let Looſe upon her, to *Inſult* her at their Pleaſure, and Openly in *Print*, and no Fault found with them, but the Diſpleaſure light upon thoſe who Durſt open their Mouth in her Defence; And *Moderation* Enjoin'd to thoſe only, but not a Word to the *Attacking* ſide?

Sir, my Opinion of theſe *Papers* upon the whole is this. The *Rehearſal* came in Late. The *Obſervators* and *Reviews* had been in Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom ſome Years before he Began, and what I have Quoted is not the Thouſandth part of the Dirt they have thrown upon the *Church*. And if they ſhou'd paſs Un-Puniſh'd, and he be Call'd in Queſtion, it would look very ſtrange. For after all that is ſaid, his Crime is in Defending the *Church*. And tho' his *Paper-War* is all upon the *Defenſive*, yet in *Defence* ſome Blows muſt be Return'd. And the *Aggreſſors* muſt thank themſelves.

But, as I told you, I believe nothing of theſe Reports. They are ſet on foot by a Party that wou'd have it ſo.

And by this they have ſhamefully given up their Cauſe. For as *De Foe* ſays in his *Preface* to *De Laun's Plea for the Non-Conformiſts*, *When Argumeuss drive the Opponents into Paſſions and Exceſſes, like ſtrong Purges; 'tis a Proof of their Operation, that they cauſe Griping Pains in the very Bowels of the Patient.* And again, *The Knocking-down-Arguments of a Goal*, &c. *are but the ſure Refuge of a Cauſe by no other Argumeuts to be Defended.*

If I hear any more of this Matter, you ſhall know, from

January, the 18. 1708. *SIR,*

Your very humble Servant.

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